

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Appln. No: 10/762,879
Applicants: Joseph H. Holland et al.
Filed: January 22, 2004
Title: METHOD OF ENABLING ACCESS TO DATA STRUCTURE
T.C./A.U.: 2445
Examiner: Jeffrey R. Swearingen
Confirmation No.: 5447
Docket No.: LMK-100US

REPLY BRIEF

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

Responsive to the Examiner's Answer dated November 8, 2010, Appellants respectfully submit the following comments for consideration by the Board.

On page 6 of Appellants' Appeal Brief, Appellants make an argument which has not been properly rebutted in the Examiner's Answer. In particular, on page 6 of the Appeal Brief, Appellants state that the following claimed feature is neither disclosed nor suggested by the art of record:

... wherein one of said sections of one of said users is permitted to partially overlap another of said sections of another of said users without completing overlapping said another of said sections.

On page 5 of the Examiner's Answer, the Examiner states that the above features disclosed by Cseri in Figs. 5a and 6f. Appellants have reviewed Cseri, Figs. 5a and 6f and have not found the above feature. Figs. 5a and 6f disclose the ability to "protect active blocks" on a page. Appellants claimed "overlap" feature is completely lacking from the art of record. As explained in the Appeal Brief, as Ryan (the primary reference) assigns users to spreadsheets on a per layer basis, the ability to permit partial overlap of authorized sections of a spreadsheet is impossible for Ryan to achieve.

On page 5 of the Examiner's Answer, the Examiner gives an example of how Cseri could allegedly read on Appellants claimed feature. The Examiner's Answer states:

An example of selecting a section which can partially overlap another section, where one block of cells is 3x3 and a smaller block of cells is 2x2, and only the 2x2 cells have selected properties

The Examiner has not provided any explanation of where the Examiner's "example" is disclosed by the cited reference. Accordingly, the rejection is improper.

On page 5 of the Examiner's Answer, lines 13-20, the Examiner's Answer makes certain characterizations of the references in order to explain why it would be obvious to combine the references. In particular, the Examiner's Answer states:

Cseri disclosed setting spreadsheets security policies for cells. Fig. 5a, spreadsheets are made of cells. Ryan disclosed a worksheet was constituted of cells ... it would have been obvious ... if Ryan could apply security policies to a worksheet ... one of ordinary skill in the art could apply such security policies to a portion of the worksheet ...

The above quote from the Examiner's Answer mischaracterizes the prior art references. Cseri imposes security policies for EVERYONE, i.e., once access to a cell is blocked, then NO ONE can get access to the cell (see Col. 4, line 67-Col. 15, line 4: "with block properties, the user can change ... whether columns or rows are revealed or hidden ...). Hiding columns or rows from everyone is completely contrary to Appellants claimed invention. Thus, again, Appellants claim:

... one of said sections and one of said users is permitted to partially overlap another of said sections of another of said users ...

Appellants claim:

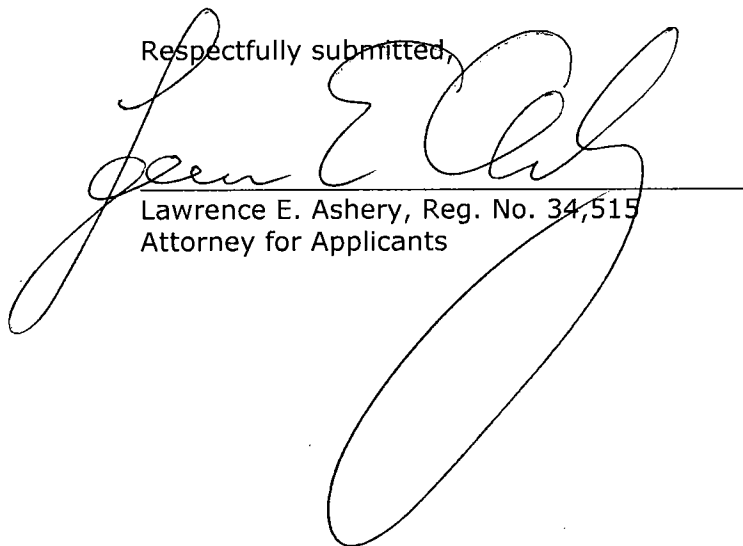
... displaying the sections each of the users has access to ...

... preventing any of said users from having access to any of said sections which have not been associated with the address of said any of said users

The ability to have a section which overlaps another section where one of those sections has been prevented from user access is lacking from the art of record. For this additional reason, claim 1 is patentable over the art of record.

Allowance of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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